researchers and also ensures positive communities. outputs for Community engaged research, which includes such methods as participant observation and interviews. unravels women's diverse identities and positions and contributes to undermining biases against women as victims of an oppressive culture. As many of us take our research to online settings due to COVID-19 pandemic, Allam's essay reiterates the value of this approach and reminds us of the necessity to pursue community engaged research during the pandemic albeit in a limited fashion.

Together, these contributions offer a glimpse of recent developments and provide provocative insights by looking beyond Islam to show the diverse and complex ways in which political context and human agency shape the status of women and gender politics in MENA.

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UNEQUAL CITIZENS: STATE LIMITATIONS ON WOMEN'S NATIONALITY RIGHTS

By Lillian Frost

"When you turn 18, you realize you are a stranger, but I don't know Syria. People told me I am not Jordanian...Many of my friends do not know that I am not Jordanian; I try not to bring it up. It is embarrassing when everyone thinks you are Jordanian and you have this different color identity card...

I went to a bank and wanted to talk to an employee about cashing my paycheck. When I showed my passport, they were surprised I was Syrian because I have a Jordanian accent...

I can't even donate blood for my mother because I do not have a national number."¹⁵

In most of the Arab world,¹⁶ women cannot pass their nationality onto their spouses and children on equal terms with men, and in many cases, women cannot confer their nationality at all. The introductory quote illuminates that this often means the child of a citizen mother and noncitizen father is not automatically a citizen in the mother's country and in some cases, cannot ever become a citizen in the mother's country. For example, in Jordan, that child could not obtain Jordanian nationality, even if that child was born and raised there: instead, that child would need to apply for residency, could not access work sectors reserved for citizens (e.g., medicine, engineering, etc.), and could not even donate blood to a Jordanian family member.

Although this phenomenon is not limited to the Arab world—as of 2018, 46 states prohibit women from passing their nationality onto their spouses or children on equal terms with men; 13 of which effectively prevent women from passing on their nationality at all—it is prevalent in Arab states.¹⁷ Currently, female citizens in 16 Arab countries cannot confer their nationality to their spouses on the same terms as men. Algeria is the only Arab state that has revised nationality its law to remove this discrimination fully.¹⁸ Similarly, 15 Arab countries prevent women from passing their nationality to their children on equal terms with men. The only Arab states that have removed this discrimination fully are Algeria. Egypt, and Morocco.¹⁹ Considering that most states around the world removed this discrimination from their nationality laws in the 1980s, after the adoption of the

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, *why have some states maintained this discrimination?*

In addition, within the Arab world, there is substantial variation in the levels of this discrimination toward women (DTW), as shown in Table 1. For example, Tunisia allows women to transmit their nationality to their children on equal terms with men when the child is born in-country (though not when born abroad), and Tunisia facilitates (though does not automate) the naturalization of female citizens' foreign spouses by removing the residency requirement in this process. In addition, Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, and Yemen typically allow women to pass their nationality to their children (though not to their spouses) under the same conditions as men.²⁰

Table 1: Levels of DTW in ConferringNationality in Arab States (as of 2018) 21

Extent of DTW in Conferring Nationality in Law	Arab States		
(1) Low or No Discrimination	Algeria, Tunisia		
(2) Partial Discrimination	Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, Yemen		
(3) High Discrimination	Sudan, Libya, UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman		
(4) Full Discrimination Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Kuwait, Qata			

Likewise, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Libva, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have introduced legislation indicating that women can pass their nationality onto their children and spouses through certain procedures (while men confer theirs automatically), though these states may not implement these provisions or may make them strict and limited.²² Further, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Kuwait, and Qatar do not allow citizen women to confer their nationality to their children or spouses under nearly any circumstances.²³ and even these circumstances often are not implemented in practice.²⁴ What explains variations in the extent of this DTW across states?

Existing Explanations of DTW in State Policies

Much of the literature explaining the presence and extent of DTW in state policies focuses on three main explanations: cultural and religious structures, women's activism, and women's political and economic participation. First. many highlight conservative personal status codes or family laws that codify rules of patrilineal descent as a perpetuating source of women's inequality. including in nationality laws.²⁵ Similarly, others point to religious doctrine. particularly in Islam and Catholicism, as upholding gender inequality,²⁶ including the institutionalization of religion in the state, rather than religious tenets themselves.²⁷

Second, many scholars highlight the role of women's activism in pushing through reforms that expand women's rights. Some argue that reformist coalitions, including feminist activists, lawyers, state officials, academics, and social workers, are central in mobilizing demands for greater women's rights.²⁸ These groups can become influential by teaming up with leftist political parties and human rights movements²⁹ or presenting their arguments within an existing social framework, such as Islam.³⁰ In these studies, women's movements are central in directing a government's attention to women's rights issues.³¹

Third, there is a diverse literature arguing that states grant women more rights when women participate widely in the government and economy. Some argue that higher literacy and educations rates as well as labor force participation for women are central in empowering them to address gender discrimination.³² Others contend that legal gender discrimination persists when women lack political representation, such as in legislative and executive positions.³³

A New Lens: Demographic Politics and DTW in Nationality Conferral

Although these existing explanations are central in explaining the original introduction of DTW in nationality laws,³⁴ my research, using quantitative and qualitative data, suggests that concerns with migration and demography play a critical role in motivating the persistence and extent of this DTW. The quantitative data reflect an original dataset I compiled on the presence of DTW in 172 states' nationality laws from 2003-18 and investigates whether larger per capita migrant populations correspond with the persistence of DTW in spousal and descent (child) nationality conferral. The qualitative data draw from interview research on this topic in Jordan, where I conducted roughly 200 interviews with governmental officials, lawyers, families affected by these policies, and others during 14 months of fieldwork from 2016–19. Jordan is an interesting case because of its high levels of DTW in nationality conferral, which is somewhat surprising given that Jordan tends to have more moderate policies that grant women relatively more rights than other states in the region.

My research finds that larger migrant populations and more sensitive demographic politics are important factors behind the persistence of high DTW in the Arab world. I contend that migrant's and women's rights intersect in nationality laws because, if a state reforms its law to allow citizen women to transmit their nationality, then this creates a new pathway to citizenship for migrants who marry citizen women as well as for their children. This new pathway, regardless of its implications for women's rights, can threaten demographic politics. The addition of this *new* pathway is central in these debates because it places the focus on preventing the expansion of access to nationality rather than necessarily removing this access. As such, men's well-established and long-existing rights to nationality conferral often do not encounter opposition in these debates.³⁵

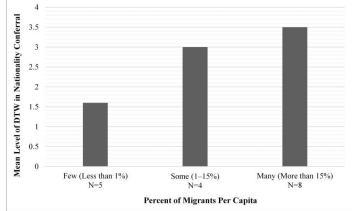
The link between large migrant populations and more restrictive nationality laws is wellestablished in the citizenship literature.³⁶ However, this research innovates by connecting this finding to the persistence of DTW in laws governing the conferral of a state's nationality.³⁷ The remainder of this research note will unpack these findings.

Large Per Capita Migrant Populations and High DTW in Nationality Conferral

First, my initial research indicates that states hosting more migrants per capita tend to have higher levels of DTW in their nationality laws. A simple comparison of the mean extent of DTW in states by the levels of migrants per capita in the Arab world highlights this observation, as shown in Figure 1.³⁸

Figure 1: Mean DTW in Nationality Conferral by Per Capita Migrant Population





Second, based on research in Jordan, states reference migrants directly in their explanations for the persistence of this DTW. In an official Jordanian announcement regarding the government's decision not to remove this DTW. then Prime Minister. Abdullah Ensour, explicitly stated that the "might affect the demographic reform balance in Jordan and might lead to empty[ing] Palestine from its people."39 A former prime minister I interviewed also noted government concerns with migrant naturalization when discussing the persistence of this DTW in Jordan: "There are 600,000 Egyptian men in Jordan, also Iraqis and Syrians, they would all marry Jordanian women," and "we can't have citizenship equality without a solution to the Palestine issue."40 Another former minister familiar with this issue explained, "60,000 women are married to non-Iordanians; 90% of them are Palestinians...300,000 married to Palestinians [husbands and children] would become Jordanian overnight; this is a problem for Jordan's identity."41

Securitizing Migrants and the Persistence of DTW in Nationality Conferral

Third, these quotes highlight that, in connecting this DTW to migrants, states can turn nationality law reform into a security issue. This step to "securitize" reform reflects broader securitization processes, where leaders cast an issue as an existential threat that calls for extraordinary measures beyond the norms of everyday politics.42 As such, leaders can lift an issue "above politics" and block reform due its security to implications.⁴³ With nationality reforms, states can frame these policies as a "societal threat" because they would integrate migrants, including refugees, by providing them with a new pathway to citizenship.44 States can describe this new pathway to citizenship as a security threat because many naturalized migrants could change the nation's identity, shift demographics away from a leading ethnic or religious group, or take limited public benefits, like jobs, welfare transfers, and natural resources, from native citizens.

А state's ability to use societal securitization—whether the alleged security threat actually exists or not-to avoid reforming DTW in nationality laws highlights how equal nationality rights can be distinct from other women's rights because this DTW is interwoven with questions about who is a true national and who should be able to gain insider status. This dimension enables states where these questions are sensitive to remove this issue from "normal politics," discussions of whether including the nationality law is constitutional, until the security threat is "resolved."45

Discussions with Jordanian officials reflect the societal securitization of women's nationality reform. For example, a former minister described the prominence of security in this area: "There are two people in me on this issue. One is humanitarian: these women deserve it [nationality law reform]. One is [about] security: we cannot afford to do it...many women are married to Palestinians...Jordan cannot take any more refugees!"⁴⁶ The same former minister later added, "Nationality law change will only happen when there is a solution to the Palestinian issue."⁴⁷

Similarly, another former minister commented: "unlike other women's policies, citizenship law stems from the security apparatus...it is not cultural or religious, it is political."48 Another former prime minister likewise noted: "I do not think of it as a women's issue, but a political one...it is not about women's rights but diluting Palestinians in Palestine." He continued "the

lack of a final solution to Palestine leads to bizarre policies, like this women's one."49

Implications

These findings suggest that states with large migrant populations per capita and sensitive demographic politics are less likely to remove DTW from their nationality laws. In addition, one way these states can buffer themselves from international and domestic pressures for such nationality law reform is by securitizing the reform. This securitization may be particularly effective in the Arab world, where even more democratic actors, like U.S., EU, and UN officials, tend to privilege stability over political and social reforms in their policy agendas.

In addition, these findings highlight the intersection of women's and migrant's rights in nationality laws as well as broader citizenship debates. In doing so, it makes two broad contributions. Theoretically, this research suggests that more attention should be devoted to understanding the intersection of women and migrants in state policies and in the persistence of discrimination toward both groups. For practitioners, this insight suggests that an effort to remove DTW in nationality conferral likelv requires simultaneous efforts to address or mitigate the demographic politics in which these reforms are entangled. Overall, migration is an important factor to consider and study further when evaluating persistent barriers to women's nationality rights.

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By Lihi Ben Shitrit

In her 1985 novel The Handmaid's Tale. which has received renewed attention following its adaptation to a television series by the same name, Margaret Atwood tells of the dystopic Republic of Gilead, a state and society single-mindedly obsessed with the management and control of women's fertility. While the description of Gilead was inspired by historical examples of policies designed to control women's bodies,50 today's "Gileads" often take on more subtle forms. In this piece I discuss the ways in which contemporary Israeli discussions of annexation of the West Bank revolve around an explicit and implicit preoccupation with the "Palestinian woman" seen strictly through her reproductive functions.

The essay is based on discourse analysis of the publications from 2013 to 2020 of the Sovereignty Movement (*Ribonut* in Hebrew) - the most vocal and influential group pushing the annexation agenda. It seeks to identify the contours of the sovereignty discourse as it grapples with the question of Palestinian demography. I argue that although more subtle than that of the nightmarish Gilead, and at times even framed as a "feminist" concern for Palestinian women's rights and opportunities, this anxious fixation on Palestinian fertility, by advocates of Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank, has equally pernicious undertones. As in Gilead, women's hierarchized citizenship is linked to their varied (desired or undesired) capacities.⁵¹ reproductive Palestinian women's incorporation into Israel - following the desired annexation of the West Bank – is a question that rests solely on their diminished threat of producing

Endnotes

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4 65% of respondents work at institutions in the United States and Canada, 19% in Europe, and 13% in the MENA.

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14 Author's Online Interview with Adjunct Professor based in the United States, May 29, 2020

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¹⁵ Author interview with an (adult) child of a Jordanian mother and Syrian father, February 2017.

¹⁶ In this analysis, the Arab world refers to 17 countries in the Middle East and North Africa: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

¹⁷ These data are from the author's global dataset on discrimination toward women in state nationality laws from 2003–18. This dataset primarily draws from the findings presented in the following studies. Bronwen Manby, *Citizenship Law in Africa a Comparative Study*. New York, NY: Open Society, 2016. Equality Now, "The State We're In: Ending Sexism in Nationality Laws," January 2016. UNHCR's annual "Background Note on Gender Equality, Nationality Laws and Statelessness" from 2014–19. In the case of discrepancies between these datasets, the author consulted the respective nationality law directly.

¹⁸ Although Algeria revised the provisions of its nationality law in 2005 to introduce gender equality in the conferral of nationality to children and spouses, Algerian Muslim women are banned from marrying, and as such, conferring nationality to men of other religions, and this restriction is not imposed on Algerian Muslim men. See Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, "Countries: Middle East & North Africa," <https://equalnationalityrights.org/countries/middleeast-north-africa>.

¹⁹ All statements regarding the content of these countries' nationality laws are based on the text of the most recent nationality laws in English, Arabic, and or French, unless otherwise noted. For greater detail on the contents of these laws in terms of women's nationality conferral, see Lillian Frost, "Brief on Women and Nationality in the Arab World," Boston Consortium for Arab Region Studies Series, April 2020, https://f2b65c88-a185-4b0b-aa91-bb12b0500709.filesusr.com/ugd/55e102_2a01ee697d564fc7b ea8723f67c13689.pdf>.

²⁰ In Iraq and Yemen this only applies when the child is born in-country. See Zahra Albarazi, "Regional Report on Citizenship: The Middle East and North Africa (MENA)," RSCAS/GLOBALCIT-Comp. 2017/3, November 2017 <http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/50046/RSCAS_ GLOBALCIT Comp 2017 03.pdf> pg. 11.

²¹ For greater detail on the contents of these laws, see Lillian Frost, "Brief on Women and Nationality in the Arab World," Boston Consortium for Arab Region Studies Series, April 2020, https://f2b65c88-a185-4b0b-aa91bb12b0500709.filesusr.com/ugd/55e102_2a01ee697d564fc7b ea8723f67c13689.pdf>.

²² Ibid.

²³ In Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Kuwait the main exception is if the child would otherwise become stateless, such as when the father is unknown, stateless, or without filiation to the child, while in Qatar, women cannot confer their nationality to their children under any circumstance.

²⁴ For example, in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, the children of stateless Palestinian fathers rarely receive access to their citizen mother's nationality. Likewise, although Article 3 of Lebanon's nationality law facilitates the naturalization of a foreigner married to a Lebanese woman by reducing his required residency from 5 years to 1 year, this policy often is not implemented in practice, particularly because this process depends on a discretionary decision by the head of state. See Melkar el-Khoury and Thibaut Jaulin, "EUDO Citizenship Observatory Country Report: Lebanon," September 2012 http://eudo-

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²⁶ Jennifer C. Seely, Emma Diambogne Diouf, Charlotte-Anne Malischewski, Maria Vaikath, and Kiah Young-Burns, "Second-Class Citizens? Gender in African Citizenship Law," *Citizenship Studies* 17, no. 3–4 (2013): 429–46. Merike H. Blofield and Liesl Haas, "Defining a Democracy: Reforming the Laws on Women's Rights in Chile, 1990–2002," *Latin American Politics and Society* 47, no. 3 (2005): 35–68.

²⁷ Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon, "Religious Power, the State, Women's Rights, and Family Law," *Politics & Gender* 11, no. 11 (2015): 451–77.

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³¹ S. Laurel Weldon, *Protest, Policy, and the Problem of Violence Against Women: A Cross- National Comparison.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002.

³² Martha Nussbaum, "Women's Education: A Global Challenge," in Marilyn Friedman, Ed., Women and Citizenship. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005: 188–214. Feryal M. Cherif, "Culture, Rights, and Norms: Women's Rights Reform in Muslim Countries," *The Journal of Politics* 72, no. 4 (2010): 1144–1160.
³³ Maria C. Escobar-Lemmon and Michelle M. Taylor-

³³ Maria C. Escobar-Lemmon and Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson, *Representation: The Case of Women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Abla Amawi, "Gender and Citizenship in Jordan," in Suad Joseph, Ed., *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000: 158–184.

³⁴ As mentioned earlier, DTW existed in nationality laws globally before the introduction of CEDAW in 1979. As such, these laws, at the time of their writing in the first half of the twentieth century, reflected widespread patriarchal norms that limited women's participation in economic, political, and public spheres.

³⁵ However, some Jordanian ministers noted in personal interviews that drawing attention to the disparity in women's and men's rights to nationality conferral in the current political climate is more likely to lead to more restrictive policies on men than to more inclusive policies for women; for example, by amending the nationality law to require that both parents are Jordanian (rather than just the father). Although such a measure would remove gender discrimination in conferring nationality to children, it would exacerbate existing problems with the statelessness and other challenges that the current nationality law creates.

³⁶ Marc Morjé Howard, *The Politics of Citizenship in Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Martin Ruhs, *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.

³⁷ This research note focuses on discrimination in law alone; for a more comprehensive picture, it is important to assess discrimination in practice as well. For example, see: Lillian Frost and Nathan Brown, "Constitutions and Citizenship: Rights in Law and Practice in Jordan and the Arab Word," in *Handbook of Citizenship in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Zahra Babar, Roel Meijer, and James Sater. Routledge Press, 2020.

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⁴⁰ Author interview with former prime minister, February 2017.

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⁴² Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998.

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⁴⁴ Buzan et al., Security: A New Framework for Analysis.

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⁴⁸ Author interview with former minister, January 2016.

⁴⁹ Author interview with former prime minister, December 2017.

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⁵⁰ <u>https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2019/sep/margaret-</u> atwood-handmaids-tale-testaments-real-life-inspiration/

⁵¹ For discussions of gender-hierarchical citizenship regimes in other countries in the MENA see articles by Lillian Frost, Shirin Saeidi, and Aili Tripp in this APSA MENA Politics issue.

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⁵³ "Former member of Italian Parliament Fiamma Nirenstein Europe and Israel - a story of love and darkness," *Ribonut* 3(2104):13.

⁵⁴ Avraham Zion, "We made every possible mistake, one after another," Ribonut 4(2014):13.

⁵⁵ Dafna Netanyahu, "A monster in the ultra-sound," *Ribonut* 5(2015):9.

⁵⁶ Shimon Cohen," Let's talk again about human rights," Ribonut 5(2015):18 (by "rights of the fathers" to author refers to Jewish birthrights over the Land of Israel, or the entirety of Mandatory Palestine).

⁵⁷ Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim women need saving?* Harvard University Press, 2013.

⁵⁸ "Ambassador (ret.) Yoram Ettinger Demography works in our favor," *Ribonut* 2(2014):10.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ David P. Goldman, "Judea and Samaria in a region of failed states. Time is on Israel's side," *Ribonut* 7(2016):14-15.

⁶² "Ambassador (ret.) Yoram Ettinger Demography works in our favor," *Ribonut* 2(2014): 11.

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⁶⁸ In the case of honor killings, the provocation is identified in the behavior of female victims, but such defences have also been used to partially excuse violence against male victims in response to insults for example.

⁶⁹ https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/cassation-courtsets-precedent-toughens-sentence-honour-killing'

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